SFChronicle

Thoresen Gets 6 Months in Jail

By Charles Howe

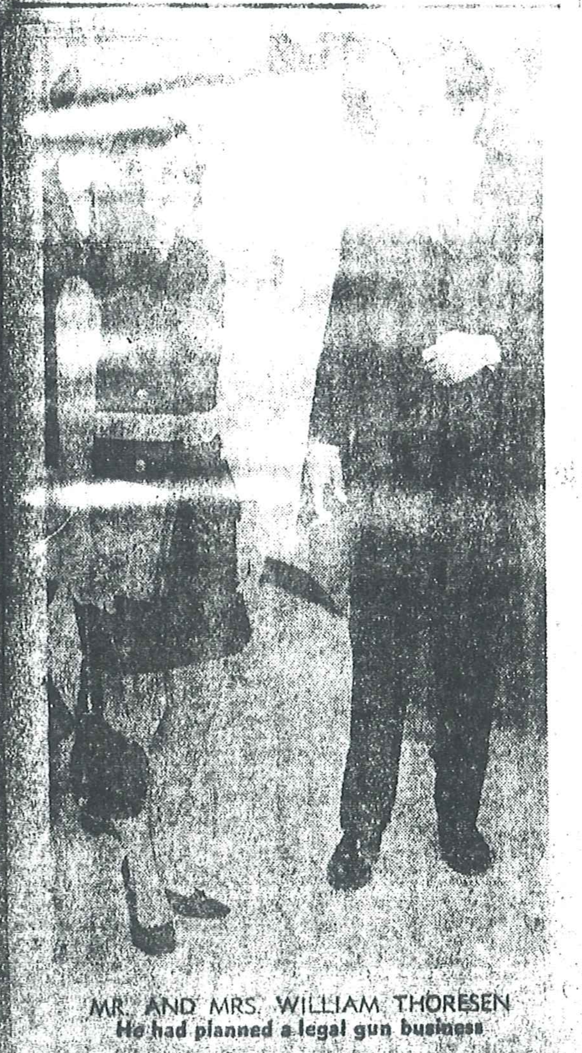
William [illegible] III—gun [illegible] Pacific Heights—w[illegible] sentenced to six months in jail, nine and a half years probation, and a $4000 fine in Federal Court here yesterday.

And his handsome wife, Louise—who helped him collect an estimated 72 tons of machine guns, cannon and such oddities as cane guns—was sentenced to 36 months probation and a $4000 fine.

Sentencing came after each pleaded guilty in Fresno last month to two charges of violating Federal firearms laws by unlawfully shipping munitions across state lines.

Both could [illegible]

S[illegible]



MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM THORESEN
He had planned a legal gun business

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Thoresen Gets a 6-Month Term

[illegible]

[illegible] years [illegible] a $20,000 [illegible]

"Of course [illegible]" said the dapper [illegible] Chicago steel millionaire after sentencing.

"Gee, I'd planned to build a steel vault in the basement of the mansion [illegible] Heights and [illegible] the legal gun [illegible]

His wife, Louise, appeared as subdued as [illegible] sentencing and indicated [illegible] was somewhat [illegible]. She still faces State [illegible] in New York [illegible] indictment charging her [illegible] possessing [illegible] munitions. It [illegible] charge that [illegible]ed of violating Federal [illegible] laws.

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Thoresen's conviction was based upon the theft, years ago, of some travel posters in Maine, and then dealing in munitions as a convicted felon.

The pair remained free yesterday on bail as their lawyers announced they would appeal the sentences handed down by Federal Court Judge William N. Goodwin.

In pleading for his client before sentencing, William Flynn let slip what might be the gun czar's biggest complaint.

"He is no longer a wealthy man," Flynn said of Thoresen, whose wealth — and no one knows how much it is — is inherited.

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Indeed, the loss of his gun collection, plus lawyers fees — and dozens of them have been involved in Thoresen's defense — have cost him "somewhere in the neighborhood of a half-million dollars," Flynn declared.

Judge Goodwin said he was aware of Thoresen's financial loss, but added the case "has been very expensive as [illegible] people are [illegible]

[illegible] In a dashing [illegible] [illegible]en suit, Thoresen told Judge Goodwin he really wasn't aware he was breaking the law when he bought machine guns in his own name.

[illegible]gressing from a speech defense, Thoresen blandly [illegible] had [illegible] would have gone and asked a friend of mine to ship them (the guns) [illegible] I would have formed a corporation [illegible]."

Cecil Poole, United States Attorney, told Judge Goodwin he [illegible] satisfied Thoresen [illegible] his [illegible] connections [illegible] or other [illegible] organizations [illegible].

But recalling how it all began — when agents with a warrant entered the Thoresen mansion on April, 1967 — Poole said:

"I still don't understand it . . . it's difficult to imagine the circumstances that confronted us that day. There was less furniture than ammunition; less objet's d'art than rifles!"

In passing sentence Goodwin characterized the 32 year-old Thoresen — who now insists he's collecting only Lionel model toy trains — this way:

"Mr. Thoresen has a tendency to want to make his own rules."

Before court, Thoresen talked somewhat more freely than has been his wont the past two years.

Allowing he was just back from London ("swinging") he added he had just shaved off a Fu Manchu moustache.

"If Joe Namath can grow one, I guess I can, can't I?" he asked.

The rambling Pacific Heights mansion will go on the block, he said, though h declined to set a sellin price.